



तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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NO BAR FOR GOING HOME

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

It does not matter what one is, whether a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, *śūdra* or a degraded woman. If one engages himself seriously in devotional service, working with body, mind and intelligence, he is sure to be successful in going back home, back to Godhead. ❧
— Purport to *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 4.21.33.

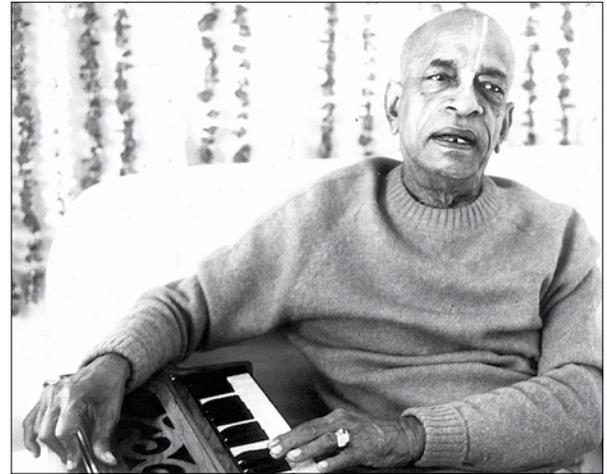
THE SOLE COMPASS FOR BHAKTI

*Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati
Thakura Prabhupada*

Only in Sri Rupa do we find what kind of devotional service we should offer to Sri Chaitanya. He teaches us what it means to perform pure devotional service, which is natural to the soul. Among the Six Goswamis, Sri Rupa, Sri Sanatan and Sri Jiva served as Sri Chaitanya's commanders-in-chief, and in the list of the Six Goswamis, Sri Rupa's name comes first.

With great hope and confidence we have come here to receive an opportunity to roll in the dust of the feet of Sri Rupa and Sanatan. [This lecture was given on the bank of the Mahananda River in Malda, during the 1925 Nabadwip Mandala Parikrama.] Our hearts are inundated with bliss when we see your enthusiasm to do so.

The place where Sri Rupa walked is rarely achieved, even for personalities like Brahma. We are ordinary living beings, yet we maintain an almost impossible desire to decorate our heads with those transcendental particles of dust. We can never repay in our unlimited millions of lifetimes even one-hundredth of a portion of



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

the amount of debt we have incurred at Sri Rupa's lotus feet. Sri Rupa Goswami Prabhu's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhuḥ* is the sole compass for pure devotional service. ❧

— *Vakṛtāvalī* (Garland of Divine Discourses) by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura Prabhupada. Compiled by Sri Sundarananda Vidyavinode. Translated by Bhumipati Das. Produced and published by Isvara Das. Page 102.

MY DIVINE BIRTH AND ACTIVITIES

Various Commentaries on Bhagavad-gītā (4.9)

*janma karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti mām eti so 'rjuna*

Translation: One who knows the transcendental nature of my appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains my eternal abode, O Arjuna.

Srila Sridhar Swami: "O Arjuna! My appearance is out of my own sweet will. My activities are those

which maintain *dharma*, and they are not of this world. In actuality, these acts are for the welfare of all. One who knows this and gives up false identification with the body does not attain another birth. Rather, such a person attains me only.”

Sri Madhvacharya: [Does liberation occur simply by knowledge of Krishna’s birth and activities without other forms of knowledge? The answer is no.] Liberation has been specifically spoken here for showing the case of a person who has attained all knowledge. Earlier [in the commentary to *Bhagavad-gītā* 3.20] I have clarified how incomplete knowledge cannot lead to liberation. Also, the literature named *Mahā-kūrma* says:

*vedādy uktaṁ tu sarvaṁ yo jñātvopāste sadā hi mām
tasyaiva darśana-pathaṁ yāmi nānyasya kasyacit*

Only for a person who knows everything said in the Vedas and thereafter worships me do I appear and give my *darśana*. I do not give *darśana* to anyone else.

So, it should be understood that only after the attainment of complete knowledge is liberation attained. Other scriptural statements (e.g. those which say that one attains liberation simply by dying in a holy place) are also applicable only for such an all-knowing qualified person. This is specified by the term ‘*nānyasya kasyacit*’ (I do not give *darśana* to anyone else) in the verse quoted above.

When Krishna says *tattvataḥ* (in truth), it automatically implies knowledge of all aspects of the scriptures. Thus, wherever liberation through some specific knowledge is spoken, one can apply this adjective (*tattvataḥ*) and no contradictions will remain. It is also said in the *Skanda Purāṇa*:

*ekaṁ ca tattvato jñātum vinā sarvajñatām naraḥ
na samartha mahendro ’pi tasmāt sarvatra jijñaset*

Without scriptural omniscience, understanding a single thing in its entirety is not possible even for Lord Shiva. Therefore, one should endeavour to know everything from all angles.

[**Translator’s Note:** The sub-commentator Sri Jayatirtha says that ‘omniscience’ means that one should attempt to understand everything to the best of one’s capacity.]

Sri Ramanujacharya: “My birth is for the purpose of the complete protection of saintly souls and for bestowing shelter upon them. It is completely distinct from a material birth rooted in karma that is caused due to the rejectable material nature consisting of three modes, and it is equipped with all auspicious divine qualities such as Supreme Lordship, omniscience, omnipotence, etc.

“My birth and activities are non-material. One who knows them in truth does not attain a rebirth after having given up his present body. Such a person attains me only.

“For a person who has understood my divine birth and activities in truth, and whose entirety of sins preventing him from attaining my complete shelter have been destroyed, such a person in this very life takes shelter of me as described earlier [in the previous verses]. Such a person thus considers me as his exclusive object of love and focuses his consciousness exclusively on me, and thus he definitely attains me.”

Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti: “My appearance is for the purposes mentioned in the previous verse. After my appearance I exhibit various activities. Simply by knowing them (*tattvataḥ*) you will be fully successful.” — This is spoken in the current verse.

The term *divyam* has been interpreted as ‘non-material’ by the revered Sri Ramanujacharya and Sri Madhusudan Saraswati. It has been interpreted as ‘not of this world’ by the revered Srila Sridhar Swami. Since this world is material, the interpretation ‘not of this world’ [by Srila Sridhar Swami] is the same as ‘non-material’ [made by Sri Ramanujacharya and Sri Madhusudan Saraswati].

Also, due to being transcendently situated beyond the three modes of material nature, the birth and activities of the Lord should be understood to be eternally ongoing. This has been explained specifically by the revered Srila Jiva Goswami in his explanation of the verse *na vidyate yasya ca janma karma vā* (*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 8.3.8) in his *Bhagavat-sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 35).

Or else, it should be understood that the birth and activities of the Lord, even though not comprehensible by mere logic, are to be understood as inconceivable simply because the *śruti* and *smṛti* statements say so. The *puruṣa-bodhinī-śruti* of the Pippalad branch of the Vedas describes the inconceivability as follows, *eko devo nitya-līlānurakto bhakta-vyāpī bhakta-hṛdayāntarātmā* — “He is the one Supreme Lord, always performing his eternal pastimes while at the same time he extends himself to his devotees and is simultaneously present as the Supreme Soul within the hearts of his devotees.”

One who knows the Lord’s birth and activities in truth (*tattvataḥ*) is one who understands the Lord’s words such as *ajo ’pi sann avyayātmā* (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.6) and *janma karma ca me divyam* (current verse) and understands that the Lord’s birth and activities are eternally ongoing. Such a person does not expect any mundane logic in the eternality of the Lord’s birth and activities. Or [for the



Unknown artist

A gopī offers a lamp to Krishna, who stands next to Yasoda

jñānī], the word *tattvataḥ* means that one understands the impersonal Brahman feature. This is because Krishna will say later (in *Bhagavad-gītā* 17.23) that the terms *om*, *tat* and *sat* are indicative of the impersonal Brahman. Thus, *tat-tva* can indicate a *jñānī* who understands my brahman-ness.

Such a person, having given up his present body, does not attain rebirth but rather attains the Lord only. The phrase *tyaktvā deham punar janma* has also been explained as meaning that the devotee attains the Lord even without having to give up his present body. This explanation has been given by the revered Sri Ramanuja as follows:

[Sri Vishwanath Chakravarti here quotes verbatim the final paragraph of Sri Ramanuja’s commentary as translated above to support the point that the devotee attains the Lord “in this very life” without having to quit his present body.]

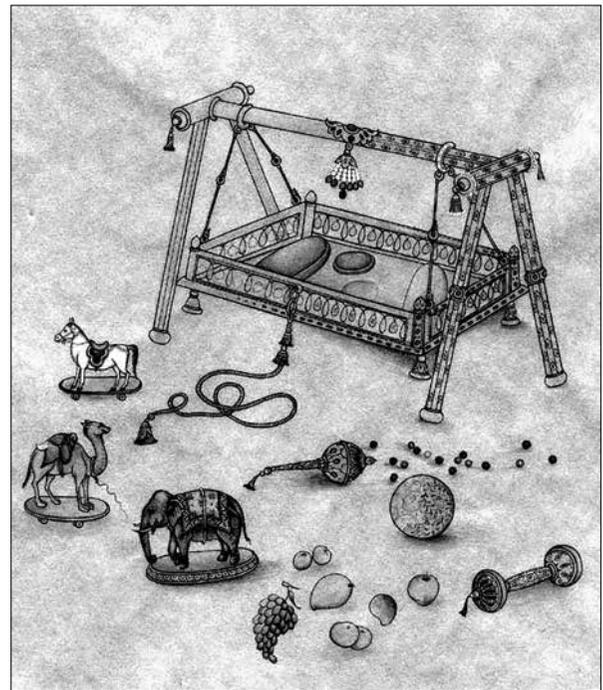
Sri Keshav Kashmiri: The result obtained by a person who knows the birth and activities of the Lord is spoken in this verse. [Krishna says], “I am the omniscient, omnipotent, all powerful Lord and the cause of everything. My birth is untouched by the material energy consisting of three modes, it is eternally perfect, and it occurs by my own sweet will through a personal form consisting of the three qualities of *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*.”

“My activities such as protecting the devotees and destroying the demons are transcendental. One who understands these in truth through an intelligence fixed in transcendence, O Arjuna, having given up his gross body and its cause, the subtle body, does not attain another birth. Instead, such a person

attains me, who is attainable only by the liberated, who is the personification of truth, knowledge and bliss, and who is the Supreme Brahman named Bhagavan Vasudev. In other words, he attains a nature similar to me.”

Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan: “Liberation, which is difficult to attain even by thousands of multi-branched practices, is easy for those who walk exclusively on the path of my devotion through the practice of hearing about my birth and pastimes. This is also another purpose of my appearing in this world.” — The current verse is spoken to emphasize these facts.

“The birth of me — who is the Lord of all, whose every desire is fulfilled, and who has various forms like Nrsimha and Raghunath in the same way that a *vaidurya* gem exhibits various colours — as well as the activities of me — such as the pastimes in connections with specific devotees — are both non-material. My birth and activities went on eternally in the past, are currently going on, and will go on eternally in the future. One who knows my birth and activities as they are, and one who knows them to be transcendental by reading my direct words and reading scriptures such



Painting by B. G. Sharma

Krishna's toys

as the *Puruṣa-bodhini-śruti*, which says, *eko devo nitya-līlānurakto bhakta-vyāpī bhakta-hṛdayāntarātmā* — ‘He is the one Supreme Lord always performing his eternal pastimes while at the same time he extends himself to his devotees and is also simultaneously present as the Supreme Soul within the hearts of his devotees’ — such a person becomes firmly fixed in his faith and does not expect any mundane logic to prove these things.

“O Arjuna! Such a person having given up his current body does not attain another material birth. Instead, such a devotee attains proximity to my form, which attracts his mind in those respective activities. This means that the devotee gets liberated. Or else, for the *jñānī*, the phrase *vetti tattvataḥ* can imply that such a *jñānī* sees my birth and pastimes as being on the platform of impersonal brahman. Such a person also knows from the scripture that the term *tat* in *tattvataḥ* indicates the impersonal brahman by force of statements such as *tat tvam asi* — ‘You are that brahman’.” (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.8.7)

[Liberation is also for the *jñānī*?] Yes, otherwise the following statement of the scriptures will be contradicted — *tam eva viditvā timṛtyum eti nānyah panthā vidyate ’yanāya* — By knowing him in his brahman feature, one conquers death. There is no other path (for a *jñānī*).



Painting by Asit Haider

Yasoda with baby Krishna

In this *jñānī*-centric interpretation, other terms of the original verse can be interpreted exactly as they are interpreted above for a devotee. The eternality of birth and activities of Krishna is vividly described in other places [by me and by others like Srila Jiva Goswami].

Sri Vanamali Mishra: My birth in forms such as Rama, Krishna, etc., is like the rising of the moon in the eastern sky. My activities such as building a bridge across the ocean, lifting the Govardhan Hill, etc., are like the rising of the sun. Both are divine occurrences, i.e. they are extraordinary events possible only in my case and are distinct from [the birth and activities in] the material world. One who knows this without a trace of doubt, having given up his subtle [and gross] body, attains the personification of the highest blissful form — me — and thereby does not attain rebirth. Instead, such a person attains liberation by understanding his true spiritual identity. 🙏

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das.

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