



तवकथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 478

Śrī Kāmikā Ekādaśī

16 July 2020

Circulation 9,784

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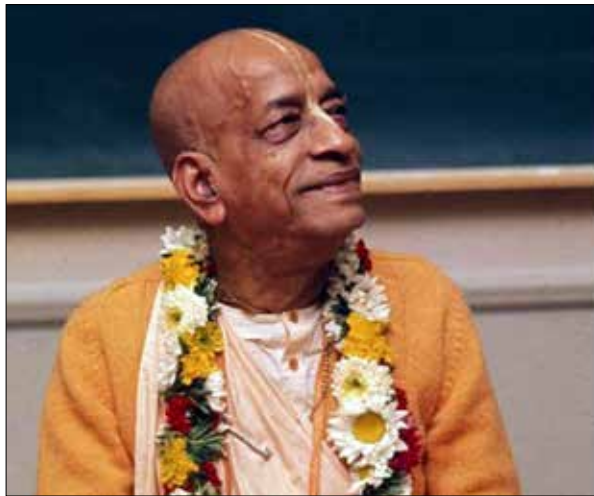
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THE NECESSITY OF HIGHER ASSOCIATION

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

An example of rising to the stage of ecstatic love by executing the regulative principles of devotional service is given in the life story of Narada that is described to Vyasadev in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Narada tells there of his previous life and how he developed to the stage of ecstatic love. He was engaged in the service of great devotees and used to hear their talks and songs. Because he had the opportunity to hear these pastimes and songs of Krishna from the mouths of pure devotees, he became very attracted within his heart. Because he had become so eager to hear

these topics, he gradually developed within himself an ecstatic love for Krishna. This ecstatic love is prior to the pure love of Krishna, because in the next verse Narada confirms that by the gradual process of hearing from the great sages he developed love of Godhead. In that connection, Narada continues to say in the first canto, fifth chapter, verse 28 of the *Bhāgavatam*, “First I passed my days in the association of the great sages during the rainy autumn season. Every morning and evening I heard them while they were singing and chanting the Hare Krishna mantra, and thus my heart gradually became purified. As soon as I heard them with great attention, the influence of the modes of material ignorance and passion disappeared, and I became firmly fixed in devotional service to the Lord.”

This is a practical example of how one can develop to the stage of ecstatic love simply by the association of pure devotees. It is essential, therefore, that one constantly associate with pure devotees who are engaged morning and evening in chanting the Hare Krishna mantra. In this way one will get the chance to purify his heart and develop this ecstatic pure love for Krishna.

This statement is also confirmed in the third canto, twenty-fifth chapter, verse 25 of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, where Lord Kapila says, “My dear mother, when a person is actually in association with pure devotees, the sublime potency of my devotional service can be experienced.” In other words, when a pure devotee speaks, his words

act upon the hearts of the audience. What is the secret of hearing and chanting? A professional speaker cannot impress transcendental ecstasy within the hearts of the listeners. However, when a realized soul who is engaged in the service of the Lord is speaking, he has the potency to inject spiritual life within the audience. One should, therefore, seek the association of such pure, unalloyed devotees, and by such association and service a neophyte devotee will certainly develop attachment, love and devotion for the Supreme Personality of Godhead. ❀

— From Nectar of Devotion, Chapter 17.

SOCIAL REFORM IS NOT BHAKTI

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

Thakur Narottama Das warns us against false *bhakti* by saying:

*karmī jñānī michā bhakta, nā habe tāte anurakta,
viśuddha bhajana koro mana*

Be not attached to *karmīs*, *jñānis* and false devotees. Rather, you should always endorse pure, unalloyed *bhajana*.

The cult of the so-called social reformers (or society makers) of the past or present age is quite different from the ideas and principles of *bhaktas*. And the followers of the former are engaged, at present, in various movements relating to personal advantages and self-enjoyment.

Those agitators, who, leaving aside all considerations of *bhakti*, are busily engaged in movements for temporal advantages only, are doing harm to themselves. And their failure to serve Krishna, who is the emporium or rather effigy of all endless, immeasurable nectar of love, joys and pleasures, bespeaks simply of their ignorance of the real state of affairs. And such desistance of service to Krishna gradually turns a man into an upholder of *nirviśeṣa-vāda* (i.e. the doctrine of the unspecifiedness of the Absolute Truth). And what can be more deplorable than such misfortune for mankind? So, to counteract the aforesaid tendencies in us, every morning we should sing, advising our wicked mind to hold bhajan, which is impossible if we be unmindful of the dictum:

*tṛṇād api su-nīcena taror iva sahiṣṇunā
amāninā māna-dena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*

Which means that *hari-kīrtana* should be continued ceaselessly and with the humility of low grass. [Cc. ādi 17.31] ❀

— From a lecture on the evening of 12 July 1936. At the Gaudiya Math, Calcutta. From the anthology *Srila Prabhupada's Discourses*, quoted in *Gaudiya Vaisnava Biographies*. Nectar Books, Union City, GA, USA.

GIVE UP PRIDE AND ENVY

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

You should utter *hari-nāma*, giving up *mātsarya*. That is *nirmātsarya*. That means, one should tolerate the superiority of others. One who cannot tolerate the superiority of others is *mātsara*, envious. So one should be *nirmātsara*, free of envy. One should not cherish any sort of vanity, any sort of pride, that, “I am a *vaiṣṇava*, I am a devotee. I am a great *sādhu*, a great learned scholar. I know. Who knows better than me?” There should not be such an attitude. Therefore, the teaching of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is:

*tṛṇād api sunīcena taror iva sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*

This is the most important teaching. One should think of oneself more insignificant than a blade of grass in the street.” ❀

— From a lecture in Paris, July 1986.

A SPECIAL EXCHANGE WITH SRILA PRABHUPADA

A Remembrance of His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada By Mulaprakriti Devi Dasi

Srila Prabhupada was excited that some of the book distributors had figured out how to sell books in many languages and that we were distributing books in countries where nobody else had before. When I went to train some book distributors in Hawaii, I would go to the airport wearing a sari and *tilak*. One day when I returned and was walking across the temple lawn, Prabhupada saw me from his balcony. He called his servant, Upendra, and said, “She is coming from preaching?” Upendra said, “Yes, Prabhupada.” Prabhupada said, “I would like to speak with her. Would she like to come up?” Upendra, who was my friend, ran down the stairs and said, “Mula! Prabhupada asked if you’d like to talk to him in his room right now!”

I had had a long day at the airport, my hair was standing in all directions, and I was nervous. I went up the stairs, not knowing what to expect. Prabhupada was sitting alone in his room at the desk that’s still there now. I paid my obeisances and sat near the back. Prabhupada motioned for me to come closer. I came closer and he motioned for me to come



The lotus feet of Sri Sri Radha Krishna

closer still. Finally, I scooted up next to his desk and he said, “Tell me about *sankirtana*. How is it going?”

I was choking from nervousness and said, “Srila Prabhupada, people are taking your books. They like your books.”

He said, “Yes? They are liking?”

“Yes, Srila Prabhupada. And not only people in America, but people from all over the world.”

“What kind of people did you distribute to today?”

I strained my brain to remember and said, “Teachers and students and lawyers and mothers and old people — every kind of person.”

He said, “More? More types of people?” I was trying to think of more people and he leaned over, excited to hear, and said, “What are they saying?”

“They say that they’re interested in this kind of knowledge.”

“What do you say?”

“I say that it’s transcendental knowledge you can’t find in any other book. It will make you happy. It’s about God and about love of God.”

“Yes, this is very nice. I know what I want you to say.” He asked Upendra to bring *Bhāgavatam canto 1*, part 1, and he opened it right to the verse that says, “This *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is as brilliant as the sun, and it

has arisen just after the departure of Lord Krishna to His own abode, accompanied by religion, knowledge, etc. Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in the age of Kali shall get light from this *Purāṇa*.” Prabhupada said, “See how beautifully *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* sells itself. Anyone who heard this from *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* would think, ‘I must read that book, I must.’ That’s what you need to tell people. Tell them straight from *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. I am excited when I read *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, so certainly they will be as well.” Then he said, “You distribute books to people from which countries?” I started listing people from all the countries I could think of that we had ever distributed a book to, and he said, “More, more, more.” He said, “I am sitting in my room absorbed in writing these literatures, and all the time I think about how these books are being received by the public. Book distribution is also popularization of this transcendental knowledge. I want this knowledge to be distributed in a way that people will appreciate it, and I want it to be popularized everywhere.”

It was a beautiful sunny day and Srila Prabhupada was beautiful, sitting sweetly and ecstatically with no shirt on, just his *sannyāsa* cloth, and when he leaned forward to ask questions his eyes would get really big.

I was young and enthusiastic, and part of my book distribution technique was to sometimes interrupt people. At one point Srila Prabhupada started to ask me a question, then he hesitated, and leaned back, I interrupted him to finish his question for him. At that moment, Prabhupada's *sannyāsī* secretary happened to walk by, heard me interrupt Prabhupada, and loudly cleared his throat. I thought, "Oh, no!" I was so embarrassed. I closed my mouth and looked at Prabhupada. But Prabhupada finished the sentence and clarified it. We talked back and forth more and he told me beautiful sweet stories about salesmanship and about women and about preaching, and a few things about his own preaching. Then he started to make a very deep comment and again he hesitated for a second and again I interrupted, but this time I said something that wasn't what he was going to say. His *sannyāsī* secretary, who was in the room, cleared his throat loudly for the second time and was furious with me.

I didn't know what to do. I was so fallen. I felt mortified and I thought my spiritual life was finished. I put my head down to make an obeisance and thought of getting out of the room backwards, but it was a long way to the door. I was down on the ground and it was very quiet. I peeked up with one eye and saw Srila Prabhupada bent way over his desk on his elbows, leaning forward right next to me, smiling beautifully and looking at me with

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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, Odisha, India 751015



Email: katha@gopaljiu.org
Website: www.gopaljiu.org
Subscriptions: minimag@gopaljiu.org

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

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great love. I didn't say anything but Prabhupada said to the secretary, who was standing there, "Just see, she is so enthusiastic." That was an enormous delivery of mercy that I shall never, ever forget.

As we were talking, Srila Prabhupada looked like a young boy. He was brilliant and was enjoying himself tremendously. I was also enjoying myself and giggling, although I don't remember what was so funny, but the mood was joyful. Then we heard a couple of bangs on the door and in came some temple managers, GBCs and other people. It was heavy-duty. One of them said, "Prabhupada, we have some issues we need to discuss with you," and immediately Prabhupada's face fell. He straightened up in his seat, looked at me and shrugged sadly that our conversation was over. At one point while he was talking to these managers he asked one of them, "How is your college preaching going?"

That devotee said, "Prabhupada we very much like the preaching."

Prabhupada said, "I hear many good things about the preaching," and pointed to me. Then he said, "Tell me," and the devotee started to describe his preaching. Prabhupada said, "And how are the books going?"

The devotee said, "Prabhupada, we're not distributing your books at the colleges because we're not allowed to take any money. We give lectures and then we give out cookbooks."

Prabhupada said, "I have not written any cookbook, have I? Have I written any cookbook?"

The devotee said, "It's been compiled, and it has some philosophy in it."

Prabhupada said, "Why do you think I am writing and writing day and night? Because I want these books to go out. You may give one lecture, but the chances are that it will go in one ear and go out the other. But if you give them just one of my books, it will stick." Then he said, "Okay, everyone out. I'm tired. We can discuss these things later." As I paid my obeisances and was leaving, Prabhupada turned to me and said, "Thank you very much." 🙏

— From Srila Prabhupada Remembrances, volume 3 chapter 42. Interview by Siddhanta Das for ITV.

