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WHEN BHAGAVATAM ENTERS THE HEART

BHĀG. 2.8.5 TEXT AND PURPORT
BY HIS DIVINE GRACE
A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI
PRABHUPADA

*praviṣṭaḥ karṇa-randhreṇa svānām bhāva-saroruham
dhunoti śamalam kṛṣṇaḥ salilasya yathā śarat*

The sound incarnation of Lord Krishna, the Supreme Soul [i.e. Śrīmad Bhāgavatam], enters into the heart of a self-realized devotee, sits on the lotus flower of his loving relationship, and thus cleanses the dust of material association, such as lust, anger and hankering. Thus it acts like autumnal rains upon pools of muddy water.

PURPORT

It is said that a single pure devotee of the Lord can deliver all the fallen souls of the world. Thus one who is actually in the confidence of a pure devotee like Narada or Sukadev Goswami and thus is empowered by one's spiritual master, as Narada was by Brahmaji, can not only deliver himself from the clutches of *māyā*, or illusion, but can deliver the whole world by his pure and empowered devotional strength. The comparison to the autumnal rain that falls on muddy reservoirs of water is very appropriate. During the rainy season all the waters of the rivers become muddy,

but in the month of July-August, the autumn season, when there is a slight rainfall, the muddy waters of the rivers all over the world become at once clear. By addition of some chemical, a small reservoir of water like that of a metropolitan waterworks tank can be cleared, but by such a tiny effort it is not possible to clear up all the reservoirs of water like the rivers. A powerful pure devotee of the Lord, however, can deliver not only his personal self but also many others in his association.

In other words, the cleansing of the polluted heart by other methods (like the culture of empiric knowledge or mystic gymnastics) can simply cleanse one's own heart, but devotional service to the Lord is so powerful that it can cleanse the hearts of the people in general, by the devotional service of the pure, empowered devotee. A true representative of the Lord like Narada, Sukadev Goswami, Lord Chaitanya, the six Goswamis and later Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur and Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, etc., can deliver all people by their empowered devotional service.

By sincere efforts to hear *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* one realizes his constitutional relationship with the Lord in the transcendental humor of servitude, friendship, paternal affection or conjugal love, and by such self-realization one becomes situated at once in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. Not only were all the pure devotees like Narada self-realized souls, but they were engaged in preaching work automatically by spiritual impetus, and thus they delivered

many poor souls entangled in the material modes. They became so powerful because they sincerely followed the *Bhāgavatam* principles by regular hearing and worshipping. By such actions the accumulated material lusts, etc., become cleansed by the personal endeavor of the Lord within the heart. The Lord is always within the heart of the living being, but He becomes manifested by one's devotional service.

Purification of the heart by culture of knowledge or mystic yoga may be all right for the time being for an individual person, but it is like the cleansing of a small quantity of stagnant water by chemical processes. Such clarification of water may stand for the time being and the sediments settle down, but by a slight agitation everything becomes muddy. The idea is that devotional service to the Lord is the only method of cleansing the heart for good. Whereas other methods may be superficially good for the time being, there is a risk of becoming muddy again due to agitation of the mind. Devotional service to the Lord, with specific attention for hearing *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* regularly and always, is the best-recommended method for liberation from the clutches of illusion. ❀

A SAINTLY LADY IN VRINDAVAN

EXCERPTED FROM
ŚRĪ PREMA PRADĪPA

BY SRILA THAKUR BHAKTIVINODE

Śrī Prema Pradīpa is a novel that was written by Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode in 1886. It is the story of three young men from Calcutta, Anand Babu, Mallik Mahasaya, and Naren Babu, who, after coming to Vrindavan and associating with devotees of Krishna, take up *vaiṣṇavism*. The following story is from the seventh ray.

One *vaiṣṇava* came and invited everyone for a festival at Prema-kunja. Anand Babu, Yogi Babaji, Mallik Mahasaya, and Naren Babu all promised to attend.

At ten o'clock in the morning, after finishing *pūjā*, prayers, and the reading of *śāstra*, they all went to Prema-kunja. Prema-kunja is a most sanctified place, surrounded by a wall and beautified by many *mādhavī* creepers. The Deities of Lord Gauranga and Nityananda Prabhu were situated in front of a broad courtyard. Many *vaiṣṇavas* were performing *kīrtana* there.

Visiting *vaiṣṇavas* were gradually coming. They all sat in the courtyard and discussed various topics.

Caitanya-caritamṛta Recitation

Within the *kuñja* there was one room for the *vaiṣṇavīs*, and there one *vaiṣṇavī* named Prema-bhavini was reciting *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Even though the *vaiṣṇavī*'s room was separate, still, male *vaiṣṇavas* were not forbidden to visit.

Naren Babu said to Anand Babu, "You see, I don't find any difference between the *āśramas* of the Brahmos and the *vaiṣṇavas*. As the woman Brahmos read and sing, the woman *vaiṣṇavas* do the same here. This arrangement is not new for the *vaiṣṇavas*. So there is no doubt that the Brahmos have seen this system and followed it."

After gradually moving forward, Naren Babu and Anand Babu arrived at the woman's room. They saw all the female servants of Krishna sitting in the dust. Prema-bhavini was sitting on a small *āsana* and reciting. She was wearing plain white cloth. Her forehead was marked with long *tilaka*, and her neck was decorated with *tulasī* beads. Her limbs were marked with the holy name of Hari. Near her was an *ācamana* cup. The *vaiṣṇavīs* sitting around her were wearing the same dress and holding *japa-mālā* in their hands. They were all looking at Prema-bhavini's face like *cātaka* birds. She was sweetly reciting from *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (2.23.9-13):

*kona bhāgye kona jīvera 'śraddhā' yadi haya
tabe sei jīva 'sādhu-saṅga' ye karaya*

*sādhu-saṅga haite haya 'śravaṇa-kīrtana'
sādhana-bhaktye haya 'sarvānārtha-nivartana'*

*anārtha-nivṛtti haile bhaktye 'niṣṭhā' haya
niṣṭhā haite śravaṇādye 'ruci' upajaya*

*ruci haite bhaktye haya 'āsakti' pracura
āsakti haite citte janme kṛṣṇe prīty-aṅkura*

*sei 'bhāva' gāḍha haile dhare 'prema'-nāma
sei premā 'prayojana' sarvānanda-dhāma*

If, by good fortune, a living entity develops faith in Krishna, he begins to associate with devotees. When one is encouraged in devotional service by the association of devotees, one becomes free from all unwanted contamination by following the regulative principles and chanting and hearing. When one is freed from all unwanted contamination, he advances with firm faith. When firm faith in devotional service awakens, a taste for hearing and chanting also awakens. After taste is awakened, a deep attachment arises, and from that attachment the seed of love for Krishna grows in the heart. When that ecstatic emotional stage intensifies, it is called love of Godhead. Such love is life's ultimate goal and the reservoir of all pleasure.

One of the listeners, a young lady named Rasa-bhavini, asked, “*Sakhī*, what is *rati*?”

Hearing that question, Prema-bhavini replied, “*Rati* is the seedling of *prema*.”

Rasa-bhavini slightly smiled and again inquired, “Where does *rati* reside, and unto whom should it be reposed?”

Prema-bhavini was an experienced *vaiṣṇavī*. She had many times already discussed all these topics and understood the conclusions. Hearing Rasa-bhavini’s question, Prema-bhavini’s heart melted in ecstatic love and incessant tears began to flow from her eyes. She began to speak:

“*Sakhī*, don’t harbor worldly consciousness in spiritual subject matters. This is not the *rati* that you hear about in the debauchee’s perverted sensual activities. The *rati* in the material body is burnt in the crematorium along with the body. It doesn’t permanently remain with you. The *rati* experienced in the dealings between men and women in this world is very insignificant, because the pleasure of the body is finished with the body. The living entity is spirit soul. He has an eternal body. In that eternal body every living entity is *strī*, or enjoyed, and Sri Krishnachandra is the only *puruṣa*, or enjoyer. The demands of the material body should be reduced and those of the eternal body should be increased. As a woman’s *rati*, or affection, rushes severely towards a man, the transcendental *rati* of the eternal *strī*’s body rushes towards Sri Krishna. The heart’s lust for sense objects is called *rati*. But the spiritual body’s natural lust for Krishna is the living entity’s eternal *rati*. *Sakhī*, if that *rati* is not manifest then why you’ll give up everything — honor and respect — to live in Vraja? *Rati* is a natural propensity. It is causeless. On seeing the sense objects it becomes agitated. As I said previously, *rati* is the seed of *prema*. This seed should be sprouted by the watering process of hearing and chanting.”

As Prema-bhavini spoke, feelings of ecstasy arose in her. She became restless and fell, while exclaiming, “O Lord of my heart, where are You?” Everyone became anxious and chanted *hari-nāma* to her.

Naren Babu said to Anand Babu, “See? Here’s an example of pure love. Those fools who call *vaiṣṇavas* debauchees are most unfortunate. They cannot understand what *vaiṣṇava prema* is.”

Honoring Prasada

Meanwhile, a conch shell was blown and all the *vaiṣṇavas* assembled in the courtyard. All the

visiting *vaiṣṇavas* sat down to honor the festival *prasāda*. In order to show respect to the renounced *vaiṣṇavas*, the *gṛhastha vaiṣṇavas* waited on them. There arose loud chanting of the names of Sri Gauranga and Nityananda. Everyone began taking *prasāda* saying, “*Prema sukhe!*” While taking *sak*, or spinach, one *vaiṣṇava* took a few strands in his mouth and cried out, “Oh! How much happiness Krishnachandra had eating this *sak!*” Taking *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*, they were all overwhelmed thinking how Krishna was pleased. After honoring *prasāda*, everyone got up while chanting “*Haribol!*” with love and devotion.

Remnants of the Vaishnavas

The festival organizers gathered together some of the *vaiṣṇavas*’ remnants. When Anand Babu asked Yogi Babaji about this, Babaji replied, “That *prasāda* is called *adharāmṛta*, nectar of the lips. Whoever is averse to honoring this *adharāmṛta* due to caste consciousness is a pretender and devoid of equanimity. He cannot be considered a *vaiṣṇava*. The festival’s *adharāmṛta* is the testing ground for those who are proud of their caste. Particularly, the visiting *vaiṣṇavas* have purified all types of people, for by taking their remnants with love, one’s pride of birth is vanquished. When one’s pride of birth is vanquished, one can get *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.” Anand Babu, Mallik Mahasaya, and Naren Babu then honored those remnants with great love and devotion.

Unity

Naren Babu said, “I see that only *vaiṣṇavism* has the purity to bring unity amongst humans. The Brahmos are falsely proud of their equanimity, but in practice they’re not magnanimous. Now I understand that in cultivating religiosity one must know that all living entities are equal. However, it is the opinion of the Aryans that one should maintain some discrimination in matters of worldly dealings and birth. When one understands this caste discrimination of the Aryans to be only a worldly consideration, then the particular faults that the Brahmos perceive in the caste system are shown to be simply extraneous.”

Anand Babu and Mallik Mahasaya both supported Naren’s conclusion.

Everyone thus finished taking *prasāda*. All the *vaiṣṇavas* chanted “*Hari bol!*” as they returned to their own places. One old *vaiṣṇavī* was the manager of Prema-kunja. She affectionately

took Anand Babu, Naren Babu, and Mallik Mahasaya to the woman's room and had them sit down. They were all pleased, being enchanted by her motherly affection. The old *vaiṣṇavī* inquired, "Where is your residence? By your speech it appears you are from Calcutta."

Mallik Mahasaya, Anand Babu, and Naren Babu then gave their introductions.

Long Lost Aunt

Listening to Naren Babu's introduction, Prema-bhavini moved forward and asked, "Can you recognize me?"

Naren Babu said, "No."

Prema-bhavini said, "Can you say where your aunt is now?"

Naren Babu said, "When I was just a child my aunt went to Kasi. She never returned home. I can somewhat remember her features. She used to put me to sleep with stories about dacoits."

Prema-bhavini said, "I'm that aunt of yours! When I left you and went to Kasi, I found that very painful. I stayed in Kasi for some time, but found the association to be not good. Thus I have come to Vrindavan. I've been living in this *kuñja* for the last twenty years. Since coming here I've become attached to *vaiṣṇavism*. I've read all the *vaiṣṇava* literatures, listened to the sadhu's instructions, and gradually taken com-

plete shelter of Hari's lotus feet. Since coming here I haven't tried to get news about you or written any letter to you. I remained silent fearing that if I inquired about you I may fall into the material whirlpool again. After seeing you today I'm feeling a kind of jubilation. Seeing you with *tilaka* and *japa* beads, I couldn't think of you as a family member. In my father's side everyone was a *śākta*, or worshiper of Devī. Please tell me how you've become a *vaiṣṇava*?"

Naren Babu told everything about himself. Hearing this, Prema-bhavini became overwhelmed with joy and couldn't speak. "Hey Nanda-tanaya! Hey Gopi-jana-vallabha! Who can understand on what pretext You accept someone and bestow mercy on him." Saying this, Prema-bhavini fell to the ground. Her hairs stood on end, and her body began perspiring and shivering.

Naren Babu picked his father's sister up with affection as if she were his mother. Rasa-bhavini, Krishna-kangalini, Hari-rangini, and other *vaiṣṇavis* smeared their bodies with the dust from Prema-bhavini's feet while sweetly chanting. One old *vaiṣṇavī* said, "Prema-bhavini's life has become successful. She is illumined with that love of God which is difficult for even Lord Brahma to attain."

After some time Prema-bhavini came to her external senses. She opened her eyes and, while crying, began to say, "Naren! Stay for a few days and visit me daily. Let your devotion to your guru's feet be fixed. Without the mercy of the guru, no one can have Krishna's mercy. When you go home, take some Vraja dust for your mother."

Naren Babu said, "*Pisīmā!* If you wish to go home, I will take you with special care."

Prema-bhavini said, "Darling, I've become indifferent to everything. I no longer desire nice food, nice clothes, nice house, or loving relations. I strongly desire to serve Krishna with a fixed mind. Had you not taken shelter of *vaiṣṇavism*, I wouldn't have introduced myself to you. The devotees of Krishna are my mother and father — they are my friends and brothers. Only Krishna is my husband. Leaving life with Krishna, I won't go anywhere. You stay well and worship Krishna."

Just then, Yogi Babaji called them. Mallik Mahasaya, Naren Babu, and Anand Babu offered obeisances to the old *vaiṣṇavī* and Prema-bhavini and went to the outer room. ❀

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